

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 OSLO 03736 181448Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 PM-05 NSCE-00 EURE-00 SSO-00
PRS-01 /034 W

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O 181410Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4244
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T OSLO 3736

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NO
SUBJECT: LORAN C: REVALUATION AND REACTIONS

REF: (A) OSLO 3012 (B) STATE 193226 (C) OSLO 3242 (D) STATE 154237

1. IT NOW APPEARS VERY PROBABLE THAT CLASSIFIED GON REPORT ON INSTALLATION OF LORAN C AND OMEGA - SCHEI REPORT - WILL BE MADE PUBLIC BY SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY CHAIRMAN BERGE FURRE. HE HAS CALLED AN AUG 22 PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH WE EXPECT HIM TO MAKE PUBLIC SOME OR ALL OF THE MATERIAL. MEANWHILE THE GON IS CALLING THE STORTING'S EXPANDED FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE BACK FROM RECESS FOR EXTRAORDINARY AUG 19 MEETING TO RECEIVE GOVERNMENT BRIEFING ON RANGE OF LORAN C ISSUES, POSSIBLE DAMAGE WHICH FURRE'S ACTION COULD CAUSE AND GON'S DECISION ON HIS REQUEST TO PUBLISH REPORT. ALL ATTENDEES, AS WELL AS FURRE, OF COURSE, WILL HAVE THEIR EYES ON SEPT 12 NATIONAL ELECTION. ALTHOUGH PRESSURE ON GOVT. HEAVY AT MOMENT BECAUSE OF OTHER RELEASE CASES, WE EXPECT GON TO TELL THE STORTING THAT IT HAS DECIDED NOT TO MAKE PUBLIC THE REPORT MOD DIRECTOR GENERAL MOLVIG TOLD EMBOFF 8-18 GON WOULD APPRISE EMBASSY OF ANY GON ACTIONS.

2. WE WILL ADHERE TO THE DEPARTMENT'S GENERAL GUIDANCE (STATE 154237 PARA 6) THAT THE USG SHOULD DEFER TO THE GON IN RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INQUIRIES ABOUT THE REPORT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 OSLO 03736 181448Z

HOWEVER, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS MAY ARISE DIRECTLY RELATED TO U.S. INVOLVEMENT AND, THEREFORE, GON MAY NOT BE ABLE OR WILLING TO RESPOND.

3. OUR ANALYSIS OF THE SCHEI REPORT (REF A) INDICATED THAT WHILE THERE WAS NOTHING WHICH IN AND OF ITSELF WAS CLEARLY DETRIMENTAL TO NORWEGIAN AND ALLIANCE SECURITY INTERESTS,

THERE WERE SOME QUOTES FROM CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS, INCLUDING U.S. DIPLOMATIC NOTES, THAT COULD PERMIT FOLLOWING ISSUES TO ARISE:

- ALLEGED GON MISHANDLING OF LORAN C MATTER AND SUBSEQUENT ATTEMPT BY GOVERNMENT (WITH USG HELP) TO COVER UP WITH SECRECY CLOAK. (U.S. NOTE OF NOV 4, 1959 SAYS U.S. VIEW WAS THAT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION HAD TO BE MAINTAINED. SUBSEQUENT GON MEMO STATES GOVERNMENT AGREED WITH AMERICAN REQUEST WHILE OTHER QUOTATIONS REINFORCE U.S. DESIRE FOR CONFIDENTIALITY.)
- ALLEGED U.S.-GON CONNIVANCE TO HIDE TRUE PURPOSE OF SYSTEM FROM STARTING AND PUBLIC (A U.S. AIDE MEMOIRE OF MAY 19, 1958 REFERS TO QUOTE THE TOP SECRET MILITARY REQUIREMENT UNQUOTE OF THE STATION.)

4. WITH THIS BACKGROUND IN HAND, FOLLOWING ARE QUESTIONS WE WOULD ANTICIPATE RECEIVING FROM THE MEDIA:

QUESTION: IT WOULD APPEAR FROM THE SCHEI REPORT THAT THE USG HAS FROM THE BEGINNING BEEN PUSHING THE GON TO KEEP THE LORAN C/OMEGA SYSTEM A SECRET. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO HIDE?

SUGGESTED ANSWER: WE'RE NOT TRYING TO HIDE ANYTHING. THE INSTALLATION OF THE LORAN C/OMEGA NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM IS SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 OSLO 03736 181448Z

THE KIND OF ROUTINE MATTER CONDUCTED BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS TO ACHIEVE A PRACTICAL GOAL, IN THIS CASE -- TO AID SHIPS, YACHTS, FRIGATES AND FISHING BOATS TO MOVE SAFELY ON THE SEAS.

QUESTION: ISN'T IT TRUE THAT NUCLEAR ARMED SUBMARINES USE LORAN C?

SUGGESTED ANSWER: AS OUR CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS, ADMIRAL HOLLOWAY, SAID ON JUN 29 AT HIS OSLO PRESS CONFERENCE, QUOTE ...THE SYSTEM IS NOT A PRIMARY NAVIGATIONAL AID FOR ANY OF OUR SUBMARINES BECAUSE IT'S NOT SUITED FOR SUBMERGED VESSELS. UNQUOTE.

QUESTION: DIDN'T YOU ASK THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT RECENTLY NOT TO DECLASSIFY THE SCHEI REPORT?

SUGGESTED ANSWER: THE ISSUE OF DECLASSIFYING THE SCHEI REPORT IS AN INTERNAL NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT MATTER. WE HAVE INFORMED THE GON THAT WE WOULD ACCEPT WHATEVER DECISION THEY MADE. INCIDENTALLY, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THE REPORT HAS NOT BEEN DECLASSIFIED.

QUESTION: YES, BUT WOULDN'T YOU HAVE PREFERRED THAT THE SCHEI
REPORT NOT BE RELEASED?

SUGGESTED ANSWER: WE DON'T THINK THAT CONFIDENTIAL EXCHANGES
BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS AUTOMATICALLY BELONG IN THE PUBLIC ARENA.
FURTHER, ALLIANCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES
REQUIRE THAT WE TALK TO EACH OTHER AT TIMES IN CONFIDENCE.
AND, AS NATO ALLIES, NORWAY AND THE U.S. ROUTINELY DISCUSS
DEFENSE MATTERS, WHICH, WHEN SENSITIVE FOR ANY NUMBER OF
OBVIOUS REASONS, IN OUR VIEW, SHOULD NOT BE MADE
PUBLIC. THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY SHARES THIS VIEW.

QUESTION: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT MR. FURRE'S ACTIONS ON
AUG 22?

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 OSLO 03736 181448Z

SUGGESTED ANSWER: IT'S NOT REALLY APPROPRIATE FOR A FOREIGN
EMBASSY TO COMMENT ON AN INTERNAL MATTER PRESENTLY UNDER
DISCUSSION. THE QUESTION OF MR. FURRE'S ACTION IS MORE PROPERLY
ONE FOR THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: AUTHORIZATION TO USE ABOVE ANSWERS
IN EVENT SCHEI MATERIAL MADE PUBLIC AND MEDIA APPROACHES US.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Drafter: n/a
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